

Message Text

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TAGS: ETRN, TGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: US-USSR TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT: PROGRAM FOR US ICE-
TRANSITING DELEGATION VISIT (05.0502)

REF: (A) MOSCOW 0432, (B) 77 MOSCOW 17567, (C) MOSCOW 552

1. AFTER BEING UNAVAILABLE FOR THREE DAYS, ISHCHENKO
OF SCST CALLED EMBASSY ON FEBRUARY 2 TO DISCUSS DETAILS
OF PROGRAM FOR PROPOSED US ICE-TRANSITING DELEGATION
VISIT. HE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- A VISIT TO A NEW RIVER ICE-BREAKER HAD BEEN SCHEDULED
FOR FEBRUARY 15;

- A VISIT TO THE ARCTIC/ANTARCTIC INSTITUTE
FOR QUOTE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS UNQUOTE WITH SOVIET
EXPERTS THERE HAD BEEN SCHEDULED, ALSO FOR FEBRUARY15;

- SCST REQUIRES ASAP USDEL COMPOSITION TO PROVIDE
NECESSARY VISA SUPPORT AND ARRIVAL DATA AS WELL.

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2. ASKED ABOUT THE CONTENT OF SO-CALLED TECHNICAL
DISCUSSIONS, ISHCHENKO ADVISED THAT SOVIETS PLAN
A FORUM FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AMONG SPECIALISTS.
SOVIET EXPERTS, HE STRESSED, WILL NOT BE GIVING PAPERS.
IT IS SIMPLY TOO LATE TO PREPARE THEM.
MOREOVER, ISHCHENKO ADDED, MORE THAN HALF A DAY
WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PERMIT THOROUGH DISCUSSIONS OF

PAPERS. AIM OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS IS TO PERMIT SPECIALISTS TO BECOME ACQUAINTED AND ALSO TO PRODUCE AGREEMENT ON TOPICS OF MUTUAL INTEREST FOR SUBSEQUENT JOINT EXPLORATION. TO ENSURE THAT THE APPROPRIATE SOVIET SPECIALISTS ARE PRESENT, ISHCHENKO REITERATED THAT SCST NEEDS TO KNOW ASAP WHICH AMERICAN EXPERTS WILL BE COMING AS WELL AS THEIR AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST.

3. EMBASSY OFFICER POINTED OUT THAT DOT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ORGANIZE USDEL TO MEET TIME FRAME PROPOSED BY SOVIETS FOR VISIT (REF A) AND INQUIRED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF DELAYING START OF VISIT BY A WEEK OR TWO. NOTING THAT HE WAS NOT SPEAKING AUTHORITATIVELY, ISHCHENKO RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DELAY VISIT FOR ONE OR TWO WEEKS BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS ICE-BREAKER COMMITMENTS. HE SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT VISIT MIGHT BE RESCHEDULED IN EARLY MARCH OR EVEN APRIL, ICE CONDITIONS PERMITTING. OTHERWISE, HE NOTED, VISIT WOULD HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE END OF 1978 TO TAKE PLACE.

4. COMMENT - WE CONSIDER THE PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE SOVIETS UNSATISFACTORY IN SEVERAL RESPECTS. WE DOUBT THE HALF DAY VISIT TO THE ARCTIC/ANTARCTIC INSTITUTE WILL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR A SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGE MUCH LESS FOR AGREEMENT TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REACHED ON A PROGRAM FOR FUTURE JOINT COOPERATION. THE SOVIETS HAVE OMITTED PRESENTATION OF PAPERS BY SOVIET EXPERTS AND THE VISIT TO THE ARTIFICIAL ICE BASIN.

THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE VISIT NOW PROPOSED IS ACCEPTABLE MAY ALREADY BE ACADEMIC SINCE, THROUGH UNCONSCIONABLE SOVIET DELAYS, IT IS HARDLY POSSIBLE FOR THE U.S. TO ORGANIZE A DELEGATION VISIT IN THE TIME FRAME PROPOSED. THE EMBASSY HAD PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED PROCEEDING WITH THE ICE-BREAKER VISIT, SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF THE STRONG PROGRAM OFFERED BY ALEKSENKO IN DECEMBER IN LIEU OF ACCESS TO THE NUCLEAR ICE-BREAKERS. THE SOVIETS ARE APPARENTLY NOT WILLING EVEN TO HONOR THIS COMMITMENT AND WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT DOT REJECT THE SOVIET PROPOSAL NOTING THAT IT DOES NOT CONFORM TO ALEKSENKO'S OFFER AND THAT INSUFFICIENT TIME IS PROVIDED TO ORGANIZE A DELEGATION VISIT THIS ICE-BREAKING SEASON. THE EMBASSY WILL SEND FURTHER COMMENTS ON ACTIONS THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT JCM AND IN THE RENEWAL OF THE TRANSPORTATION

AGREEMENT, IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, VIA
SEPTEL. END COMMENT.
MATLOCK

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